Title 063: The Effects of Strategic Communication Principles on C2 Agility, Complexity/Uncertainty, and C2 Maturity

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Alternative **Topic 2:** Organizational Concepts and Approache**s**

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14. ABSTRACT
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ABSTRACT

The complex endeavours faced by NATO in the 21st century require the creation of coalitions that include military and non-military actors. Additionally, these challenges are expected to emerge in increasingly volatile, uncertain, highly dynamic, and complex environments encompassing political, military, economic, information, and infrastructure dimensions. Some certain types of less understood and less predictable interdependent variables complicate those environments and make difficult the selection of the appropriate C2 Approach and the transition from one to another. On the other hand, the Strategic Communication Concept (SCC) provides executers with valuable instruments to create shared understanding, awareness and intent among the contributing entities and to decrease the obscurity of this socially complex and globally interconnected environment. This study employs strategic communication principles on C2 Agility components and variables of complex environments that are described in *NATO NEC C2 Maturity Model*. The findings indicate that the methods of strategic communication strengthen the components of C2 Agility and provide HQs with a suitable environment to operate in and facilitate the execution of the appropriate C2 Approach within the correspondent C2 Maturity Level. The study also offers an alternative C2 Maturity depiction encompassing all elements of the maturity model.

Key Words: complex, uncertain, agility, strategic communication, maturity.
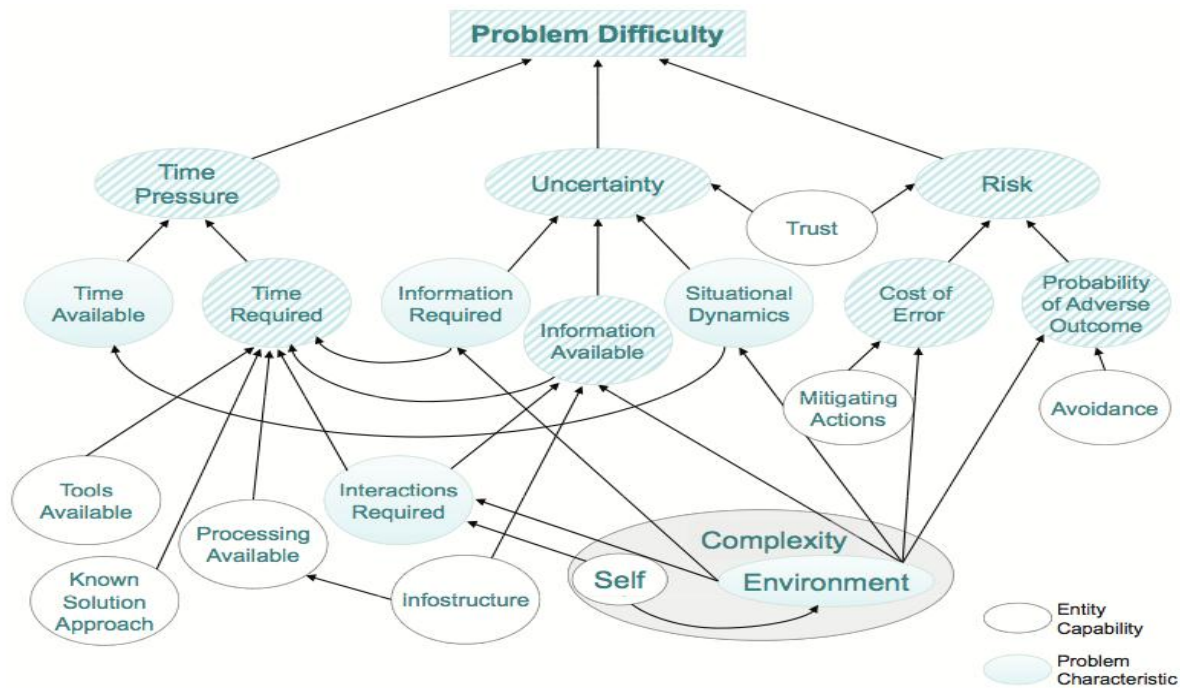
Introduction

Figure 1: Sources of Problem Difficulty (Alberts, 59)

As we see in the figure, the main challenges in front of the decision-makers are time, uncertainty, and risks. These determinants of the difficulty arise from both the complexity of environment and the complexity of entity--individual, system, organization, or collectives (Alberts, 58). The capability of entity is also another factor that affects the problem difficulty. White-colored entity capabilities may mitigate the risk and reduce the uncertainty to some extent under the pressure of time, but there are some other problem characteristics to be dealt with such as situational dynamics, lack of information, and inadequate interactions, all of which stem from the complexity of the environment. As David S. Alberts articulate, the organizations that are structured accordingly to deal with the problems and the effective interactions among the entities within the organization are main pillars of the optimum solution. In other words, an agile organization is the most appropriate way of dealing with, even if not reducing, the "combined effects of complexity and uncertainty." (Alberts, 59,60) Having said that, the measures taken to enhance the components of the agility and to lessen the complexity of the environment result in improved organizational capabilities to deal with the problem difficulty in a more suitable environment. This study analyzes the effects of the strategic communication principles on the

components of C2 Agility and the uncertain and complex operational area within the context of Mesonesia.

1. The Effects of Strategic Communication Principles on the Components of the C2 Agility

The following table categorizes the 11 principles/capabilities of the Strategic Communication Concept accordingly under each of the agility components.

Strategic Communication Ideas/Capabilities (SCJIC, 7,8)	Components of the Agility
1. The ability to integrate all joint force actions to maximize desired effects on selected audiences.	Versatility (Robustness)
2. The ability to coordinate joint force actions with the efforts of other agencies and partners within the context of a broader national strategy.	Versatility (Robustness)
3. The ability to access, produce and maintain information and knowledge on the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of potential audiences.	Responsiveness
4. The ability to access, produce and maintain information and knowledge on complex social communication systems, to include the characteristics of various media channels and the intentions, capabilities and efforts of other influencers within and having an effect on the joint operations area.	Responsiveness
5. The ability to detect, monitor, translate and assess the effects of the strategic communication efforts of others—to include friendly governments, non-state groups, neutrals, competitors and adversaries—as the basis for responding to those effects.	Responsiveness Resilience
6. The ability to estimate the direct and indirect effects of potential actions and signals on the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and actions of selected audiences, both intended and unintended.	Flexibility
7. The ability to conceive and formulate timely and culturally attuned messages.	Innovations, Adaptability
8. The ability to quickly produce and deliver information designed	Responsiveness

to influence selected audiences as desired.	
9. The ability to conceive and coordinate physical actions or maintain physical capabilities designed to influence selected audiences as desired.	Versatility (Robustness) Resilience
10. The ability to document, through various means, joint force actions, down to small-unit levels, and to disseminate this information in real or near-real time as required.	Responsiveness, Adaptability
11. The ability to coordinate, monitor, measure and assess the effects of friendly signals with other partners on intended and unintended audiences in relation to expected effects.	Adaptability

Table: Relations between SC Principles and C2 Agility Components

"The Strategic Communication with Mesonesia, 2016-2018" case which is narrated in *Strategic communication Joint Operating Concept* displays the USPACOM's critical role in improving the U.S.- Mesonesia relations by utilizing the strategic communication principles. When we look at those implementations closely, we can draw very useful conclusions with respect to the C2 Agility. Actions, attitudes, and approaches related to the strategic communication objectives affect the C2 Agility components in positive ways as well. The following part looks at the strategic communication practices in Mesonesia and shows that which practice fall into which strategic communication idea/principle category and how they contribute to the corresponding agility component, which is shown in Table above.

The USPACOM's efforts to integrate all joint force actions and coordinate them with the efforts of other agencies under a broader national strategy and to maintain physical capabilities strengthen **versatility (robustness)** of the agility (Alberts, 214). In other words, these principles permit PACOM to carry out the new mission at acceptable level of performance and effectiveness for three reasons that derive from each of these three strategic communication efforts. **First,** the broad theme—improving regional security through cooperation with Mesonesia and strategic objectives (improving relations, enhancing the U.S. credibility and legitimacy of its interests/objectives, and preventing global insurgency) set the minimum level of success and help PACOM HQ determine which actions to take to achieve this new mission at

an acceptable level of performance. This clarity of the objective allows PACOM to concentrate on focused areas with specific capabilities, prevents accumulating unnecessary forces, and enhances HQ's control over its units, all of which increases the level of agility at the end. **Second,** the coordination with partners within a broader national strategy delineates PACOM's area of interest and prevents HQ from allocating its forces to other functional areas. This coordination allows it to operate in a narrower space with its more concentrated capabilities and enable the command to cover an area of interest more effectively and adroitly. **Third,** the U.S. central aspect is "to develop cooperative security arrangement and build partnership." Conceiving and coordinating physical actions in line with this central aspect not only serve for the strategic communication purposes but also strengthen the **robustness** and **resilience** of the HQ C2 Agility. The USPACOM aims to provide security training and engineering support to Mesonesians, to participate at exercises and regional security conferences with them. Undeniably, those actions improve PACOM's capabilities to operate with the Mesonesian Army in the future. Ultimately, as it is described in the problem difficulty, the improved capabilities of entities through interaction with each other lessen the uncertainty and facilitate cooperation.

On the contrary, UN Forces in Somalia, between 1993 and 1994, had no broad strategy that would integrate political, economic (humanitarian), geographic, and military elements of the power. Political, humanitarian, and military strategies were independent from each other and there was not a group of planners responsible for formulating this over-arching strategy. The outcome was a decayed C2 structure without any means of robustness and agility (CMH, 40). Furthermore, it hardly prevented rumors and misinformation among UNOSOM staff. Additionally, UNOSOM HQ was not able to influence diplomatic community in the mission area and in neighboring countries. Even the countries contributing troops to the force were ignored and not informed adequately (CHM, 19). Therefore, these inabilities of the HQ resulted in lack of coordination of the partners' physical capabilities and poor maintenance of their support for the operation. Eventually, UNOSOM HQ could not retain its versatility required to display appropriate C2 Agility.

The USPACOM tries to access, produce and maintain information and knowledge on the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of Mesonesians and on their complex social communication systems, media channels and on other influencers within the joint operations area. These strategic communication efforts include: social network analysis to identify key persons, organizations, issues, attitudes, and opinions; academic and commercial research into perceptions and attitudes of groups; content analysis of information products (books,

magazines, stories, editorials, and etc.); indexing opinion leaders like Mesonesian 100 Index to understand their perceptions of the U.S. Thanks to these efforts, PACOM HQ attains the capability to quickly produce and deliver information prepared to influence Mesonesians as desired and to document the information of joint force actions and send them down to small-unit levels in real or near-real time. Obviously, this outcome with respect to the strategic communication improves the HQ C2 **responsiveness** capacity at the same time. These actions provide the decision makers with tools to recognize the change in the environment or anticipate it in advance and reduce the time needed to react to those changes. HQ also detects, monitor, translate and assess the effects of the strategic communication efforts of friendly governments, non-state groups, neutrals, competitors and adversaries. When PACOM depicts the map of different social communication network to identify other actors in the area, it finds out that Kirmania, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia also display strategic communication efforts to influence the Mesonesians. After having carried out such an inquiry, the HQ attains two advantages with respect to its C2 Agility. Firstly, it can respond to the changes in an appropriate way in a very short time and secondly, it identifies the deficiency and inadequacy in its C2 ability and tries to repair the lost capability. In other words, the research about the adversaries' activities contributes to both the responsiveness and **resilience** of C2 Agility of the HQ.

UN and U.S. forces were not so successful at implementing strategic communication tactics in Somalia and the responsiveness of UNOSOM HQ was weakened eventually. Two factional leaders (Aideed and Ali Mahdi) controlled radio stations in Mogadishu and disseminated propaganda messages. The audience was influenced by these groups and was not accessible for UN PSYOP units. Due to the incapability of UN Soldiers at affecting Somalians and at measuring the effects of adversaries' propaganda, the decision makers could not produce and deliver appropriate messages for the native people. In other words, the UN HQ lost its control over the population and could not respond to the changes sufficiently (CMH, 179,180). Being trapped under the lack of communication and information, the UN HQ tried to formulate PSYOP without including radio and newspaper, but, unsurprisingly, it did not produce any positive outcome (CMH,182). UNOSOM did not have an integrated information strategy at all and it was not the part of the planning and coordination process. It could not produce information designed to influence target audiences and provide the international media with necessary information to be disseminated. Arguably, the briefing materials could have been shared with the media so that they could improve their understanding of Somalia's political, economic, and social conditions for some analyzers. As a result, UNOSOM could not explain

why it was in Somali to both Somalians and international community. It could not utilize the most effective media machineries, radio and TV, but just leaflets, in a country with widespread illiteracy. Therefore, UNOSOM HQ's responsibility to detect, monitor, and assess the target audience was never fulfilled. This inability resulted in lacking responsiveness of UNOSOM HQ C2. (Manfred and et al., 18,19).

The PACOM's strategic communication cell in the HQ estimates "the direct and indirect effects of potential actions and signals on the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and actions of Mesonesians, both intended and unintended." Additionally, it "coordinates, monitor, measure and assess the effects of friendly signals with other partners on Mesonesians in relation to expected effects." For example, it pretest the messages on "focus groups" to understand the special characteristics of the culture or develop metrics to measure the effects of PACOM's strategic communication efforts. It utilizes polls, follows blogs, and tries to identify the perception of the U.S. legitimacy. Besides that, it collects data to have deeper understanding of perceptions, beliefs, and interests of the Mesonesians to determine which actions to take. Subsequently, it develops timely and culturally appropriate messages for the society. All of these efforts contribute to the reinforcement of three C2 Agility components as well. First, they increase the **flexibility** of the HQ. Rather than sticking to a certain way of action, it can choose the most effective strategy to from the alternatives formulated by the strategic communication efforts. Second, in line with the first component, the HQ's **innovatiness** improves by generating new tactics and strategies according to the changes in the operation area. Therefore, the outcomes of these strategic communication efforts directly affect the invention of new alternative strategies in the HQ. Third, in line with the first and the second components, the HQ becomes "suited for the challenge" at the end, namely **adaptable**.

2.The Effects of Strategic Communication Principles on the Complexity and Uncertainty

The complexity is our inability to understand a situation (Alberts, 50) Undoubtedly, the future operations will be carried out in more socially complex and interconnected environments. If we try to find out what kind of elements could add to the complexity of the environment, we can list the following variables. Besides listing them, we can identify some strategic communication implementations that decrease the level of complexity in the environment in the Mesonesia case. These practices allow decision makers to deal with the combined effects of complexity and uncertainty.

a. **Diverse numbers and types of entities—friendly, neutral, and adversarial actors**. **Unfamiliarity with the situation and among the entities, the absence of clarity and unity of intent and strategy** (Alberts and et al., 37). With respect to the friendly forces, the complexity involves; large number of entities, different cultures, values and norms among entities, lack of trust between them, different languages, varying level of information and communication capabilities, different approaches to organization and management. The strategic communication lessens the complexity within the friendly forces by providing them with a broad theme and strategic objectives. Even if these common goals may not be successful at building a common intent, they reconcile the entities' intents and vision, minimizes possible sources of friction and deconflicts their actions. The strategic communication strategy planners integrate all joint forces actions and coordinate them with other agencies under a broad national strategy. As a result, even if they have some types of diversities among them, the strategic communication practices lessen the complexity within the organization/collective and enable entity to deal with the problem difficulty more effectively.

b. **Unstable political, social, military, and economic environment, unpredictable developments in the environment, uncertain values and opaque interactions, unfamiliarity with the situation, the distorted nature of the interaction among physical, information, cognitive and social domains.** (Alberts and et al., 11) The strategic communication planners segment the society and identify its characteristics from various perspectives to make it more understandable. For example, Mesonesia is a highly fragile country. Majority of its population (80 million) is Austronesian, but there are important numbers of Negrito, Melanesian, Chinese, and Arabs from small Middle Eastern kingdom Kirmenia together with some European minorities. 200 distinct ethnic groups live in Mesonesia. While its official language is Mesonesian, there are over 100 local dialects. Due to the lack of urbanization, anti-governmental protests are widespread there. This unrest is the result of the clash between old perceptions and new modernization. Tallar, which is another big city, is an oil town and it has characteristics from both Srivijaya and Iskandrika. Mesonesian Muslims have close ties with Kirmenians and are distrustful about the U.S. Kirmenians are also inclined to be part of the international terrorist activities. (SCJIC, 89,90) Under such circumstances, it is very difficult to sustain an operation. Together with other command and control implementations, the strategic communication units implements social network analysis, collects data on Mesonesians' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and interest to provide a deeper understanding of the society. Feedback is an invaluable tool to understand the environmental dynamics, to increase the situational awareness, and to adjust the decisions accordingly. (Alberts, 52)

Strategic communication planning heavily relies on measuring the effects of the messages and formulating the most appropriate one for the circumstance. Therefore, the feedback process of C2 Agility and the SC overlaps. Additionally, in order to undermine Mesonesian support to Kirmenians, PACOM sends appealing messages to the intended audience. As a result, the PACOM HQ needs to monitor the outcomes of the strategic communication policies before deciding which C2 Approach to choose. In other words, C2 Agility and strategic communication efforts are two sides of a coin.

3. The Effects of Strategic Communication Principles on C2 Maturity

C2 Maturity is described as the function of the C2 Approaches, the recognition of situation/which one of them is appropriate, and the ability to adopt or transit to appropriate C2 Approach (Alberts and et al., 79). When we look at these three components of C2 Maturity function closely, we can see that the strategic communication principles directly affect them.

a. C2 Approaches: "A C2 Approach is described as a specific region within the C2 Approach space." It has three dimensions: (1) Allocation of decision rights, (2) Patterns of interaction, and (3) Distribution of information (Alberts and et al., 37). Firstly, the strategic communication concept allows organizations to allocate decision rights to the appropriate level depending on the circumstances. Whereas the theme is formulated at the higher ranks, the messages are sent at the various levels of the hierarchy. Admittedly, this implementation does not completely overlaps with the allocation of decision rights to the collective or to the entity, but it corresponds with the dynamic nature of participation of the subordinates or seniors at the situations. Secondly, interaction among the entities and collectives is strongly encouraged in strategic communication concept. It favors the interaction within and between the organizations. It also requires interaction with the adversaries and neutrals. Therefore, the implementation of the strategic communication principles strengthens the links between entities/collectives as much as the planners want and the circumstances require. Finally, the strategic communication concept utilizes the distribution of information at all levels of the organization and even outside of it. Considering the facts that the strategic communication facilitates coordinating and maintaining capabilities, integrating actions, and forcing all agencies and partners under a broader organizational strategy, one can argue that these principles allow decision makers to adopt the most mature C2 Approach from the C2 Approach space.

b. Recognition of the Situation: The strategic communication concept also helps planners decide which C2 Approach is appropriate for the condition. Admittedly, there are

various variables affecting them, but they may still utilize the feedback mechanism of the strategic communication. The HQ constantly detects, monitors, and assesses the audience not only in terms of communication but also in terms of security. The situation could be simple, complicated, complex, and dynamic (Alberts and et al., 81). However, in any case, decision makers can use the information strategic communication cell produces to decide how to react to the developments and which C2 Approach should be adopted.

c. Adoption or Transition to Appropriate C2 Approach: This component of the function directly refers to C2 Agility. Due to the contributions of the strategic communication principles to C2 Agility, which are explained in the first part of the paper, C2 Maturity benefits from their implementation in a positive way as well.

4. Conclusion

A certain type of C2 Approach is the function of the allocation of decision rights to the collective, patterns of interaction among entities, and the distribution of information. Together with C2 Approach; the recognition of the situation, the deeper understanding of the complexity and uncertainty of the environment and the ability to transit between these C2 approaches, in other words the capability of C2 Agility, constitute a "mature" C2 structure (Alberts and et al., 37). The Strategic Communication principles affect all of these three elements of C2 Maturity. The effective implementations of them contribute to the entity's agility by strengthening its components. At the same time, these principles put lights on the complexities and uncertainties of the environment. In other words, the strategic communication helps planners and decision makers choose appropriate C2 Approach, move from one to another, and understand the conditions of the environment more accurately.

As we see in the Figure below, C2 Maturity Levels are depicted as the function of two determinants, which are C2 Approaches and the ability of the entity to transit between them. However, C2 Maturity is the function of three elements, which are described previously. The "the ability to recognize when each of C2 Approaches are appropriate " is missing in the depiction below. Therefore, rather than utilizing such a 2-D table, we should use a 3-D figure to be able to show C2 Maturity with its all components. An alternative figure is depicted in Figure 3.

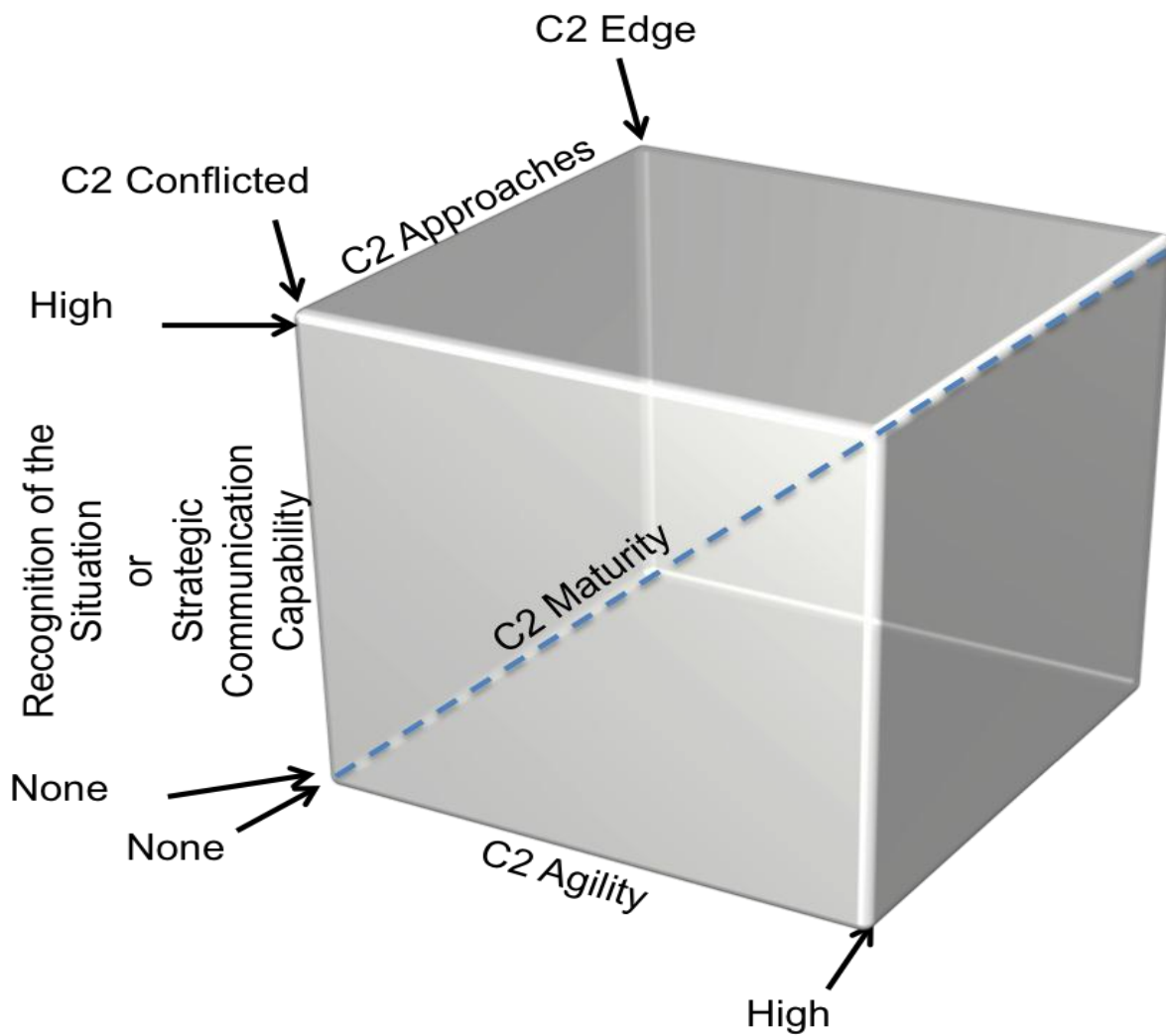Figure 2: C2 Maturity and C2 Approaches (Alberts and et al., 80)

Figure 3: An Alternative C2 Maturity Depiction

Both in conventional warfare and peace operations, C2 Maturity requires decision makers to perform adequately at all of these three components. As it was explained in previous parts of the study, the strategic communication facilitates the implementation of those elements of the C2 Maturity. Specifically, the feedback mechanism of it provides invaluable information with respect to the "recognition of the situation." Therefore, especially for the peace operations, the recognition of the situation may be replaced with the "strategic communication capability." While some high-tech C4ISR equipment enable HQ to detect, monitor, and evaluate the condition in combat operations, the communication capabilities of the HQ may be more essential in peace operations. As we see in the IFOR in Bosnia and KFOR in Kosova, the force's ability to communicate effectively with U.N. or other agencies, allies, and civilians directly determined the HQ's C2 Maturity.

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The Effects of Strategic Communication Principles on C2 Agility, Complexity/Uncertainty, and C2 Maturity

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Outline

*   **Introduction**

*   **Problem Difficulty**

*   **The Effects of Strategic Communication on:**

    - C2 Agility Components

    - Operational Environments
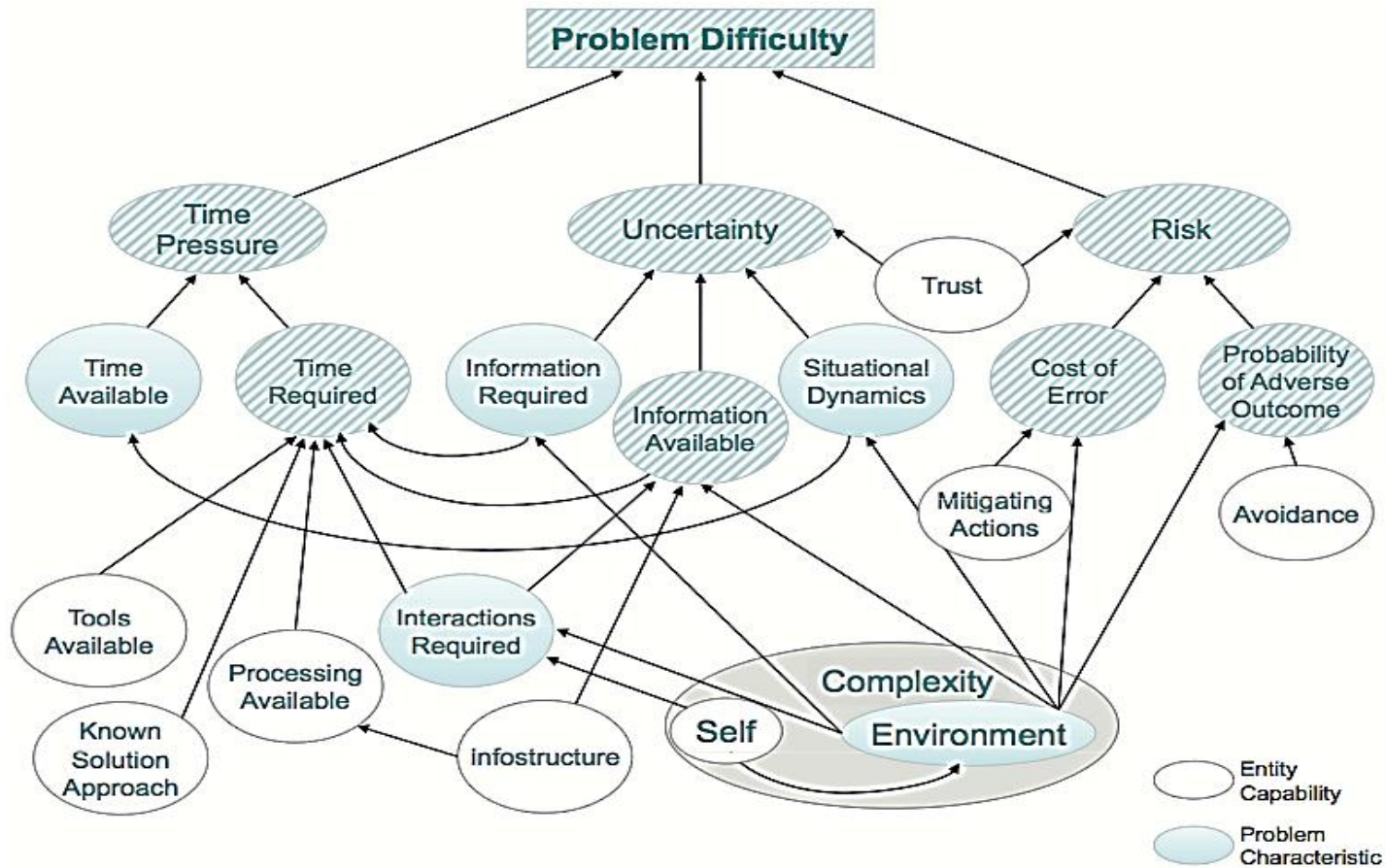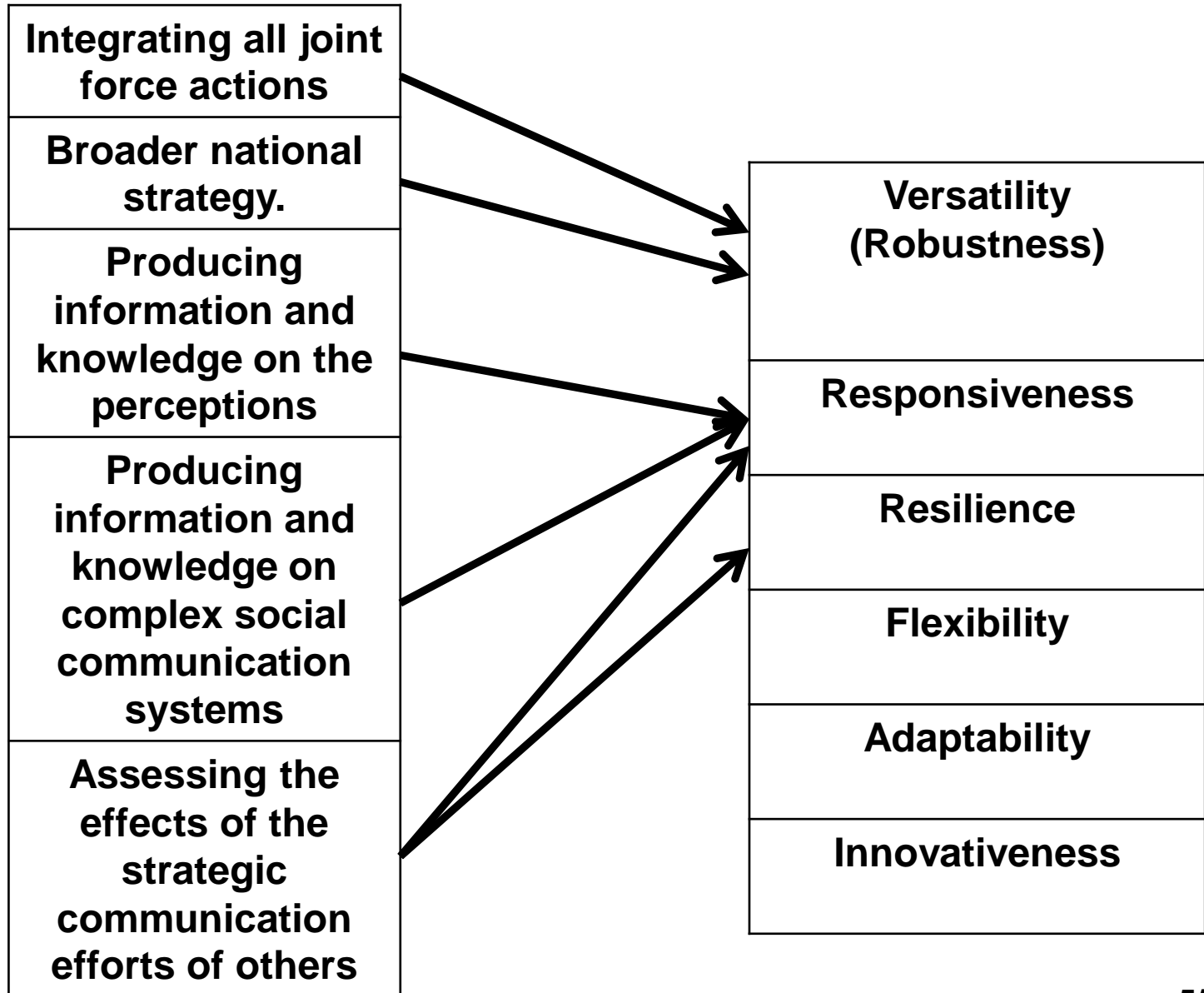
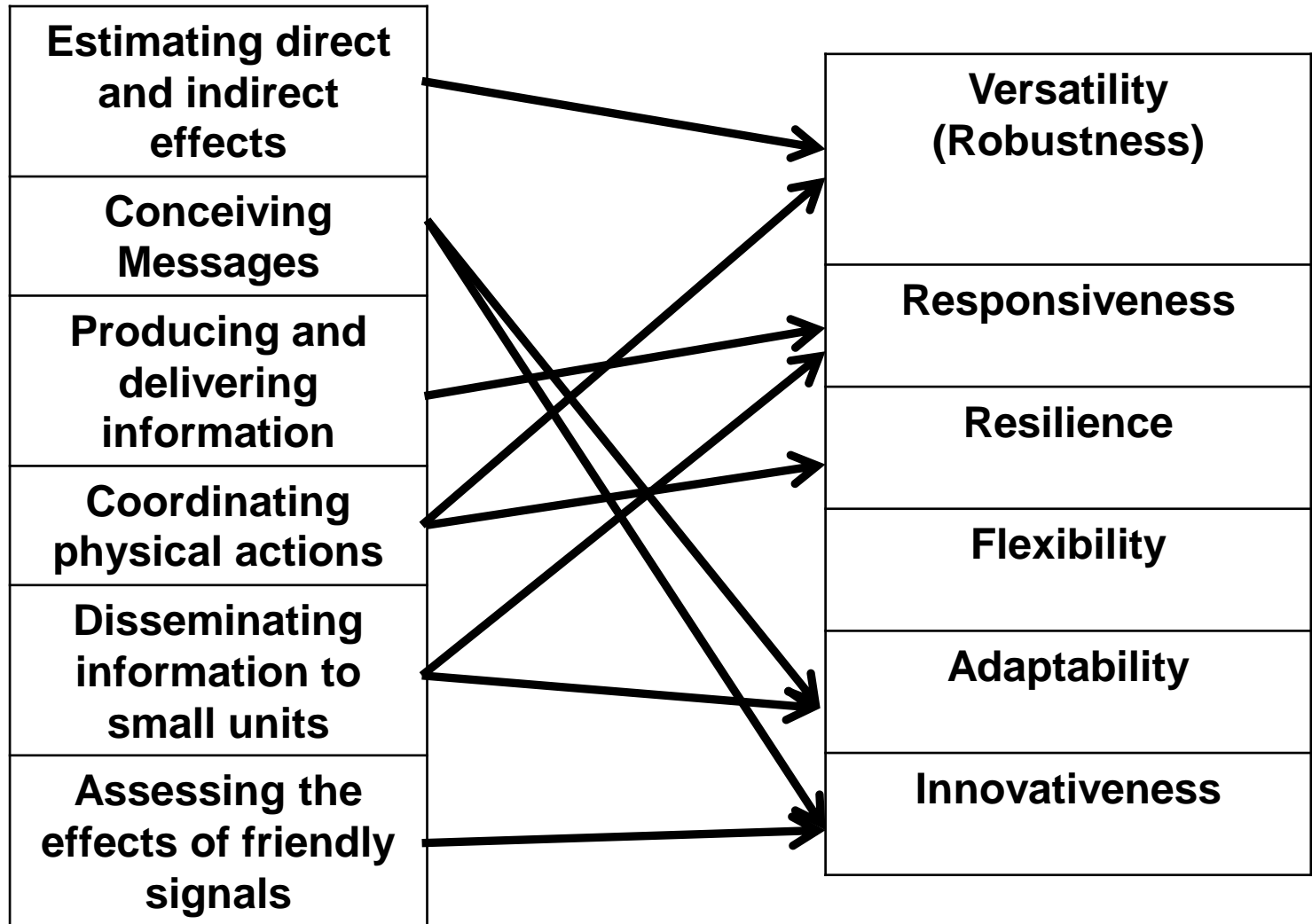   **- C2 Maturity**

*   **Conclusion**

Problem Difficulty

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Versatility(Robustness)(Good Example)

Broad Theme
Improving regional security through cooperation with Mesonesia.

Strategic Objectives
Improving relations, enhancing the U.S. credibility and legitimacy

- Determined standards of "success"
- Determined actions to take
- Focused on specific areas
- Prevented unnecessary force deployments
- Enhanced control over units and area
- Delineated HQ's area of interest
- Prevented force allocations to other functions
- Concentrated capabilities on specific areas

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Versatility(Robustness)(Good Example)

Central Aspect
Developing cooperative security arrangement and building partnership

Improved capabilities of armies through interaction

Lessened the uncertainty

Facilitated cooperation

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Versatility(Robustness)(Bad Example)

In Somalia between 1993 and 1994:

There was not a "Broad Strategy"

Hardly prevented rumors and misinformation among UNOSOM staff

UNOSOM HQ was not able to influence diplomatic community

Countries contributing troops to the force were ignored and not informed adequately

Political, humanitarian, and military strategies were independent from each other

There was not a group of planners responsible for formulating this over-arching strategy

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Versatility(Robustness)(Bad Example)

Results:

A **decayed C2 structure** without any means of robustness and agility

Lack of coordination of the partners' physical capabilities and **poor maintenance of their support** for the operation

UNOSOM HQ **could not retain its versatility** required to display appropriate C2 Agility.

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Responsiveness-Resilience (Good Example)
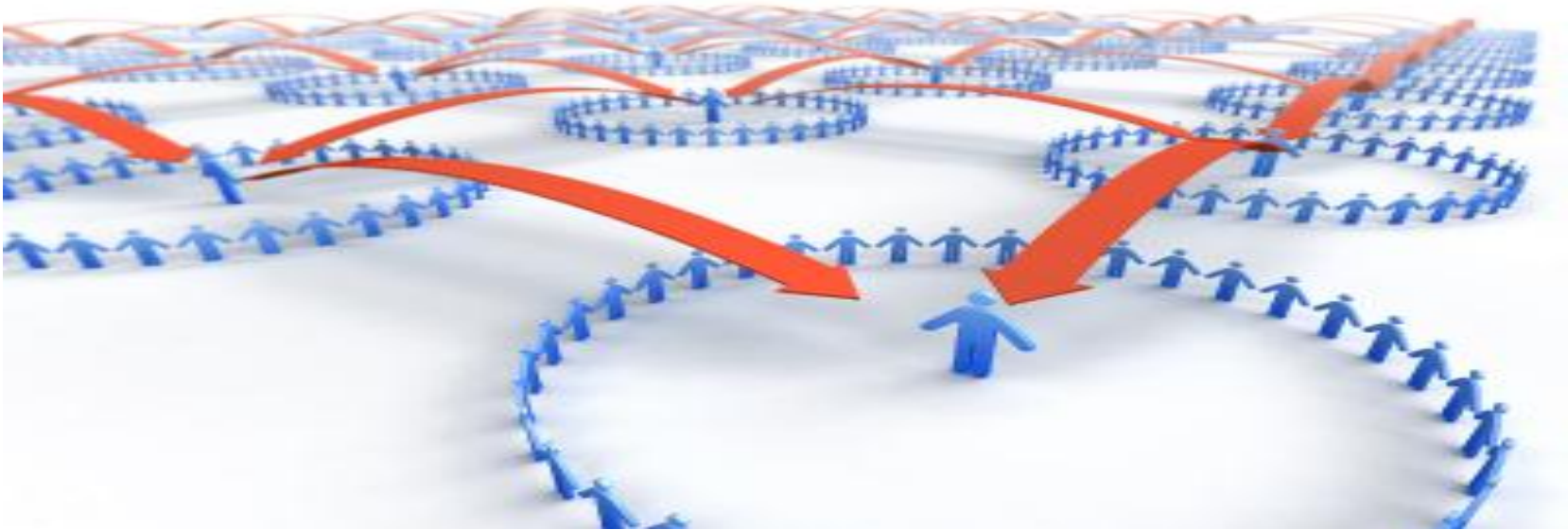
Social network analysis to identify key persons,

Academic and commercial research into perceptions

Content analysis of information products

Indexing opinion leaders

Recognizing the change in the environment or anticipating

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Responsiveness-Resilience (Good Example)

When PACOM depicts the map of different social communication network to identify other actors in the area, the HQ attained two advantages with respect to its C2 Agility.

It was able to respond to the changes **in an appropriate way** in a very short time.

It **identified the deficiency** and inadequacy in its C2 ability and tried to **repair the lost capability.**

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Responsiveness-Resilience (Bad Example)

In Somalia between 1993 and 1994:

Two factional leaders (Aideed and Ali Mahdi) disseminated **propaganda messages**

The audience was influenced by these groups and **was not accessible for UN PSYOP units**

The decision makers **could not produce and deliver** appropriate messages

The UN HQ **tried to formulate PSYOP without including radio** and newspaper

UNOSOM **did not have an integrated information strategy** at all

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Responsiveness-Resilience (Bad Example)

Results:

UNOSOM could not explain why it was in Somali

It could not utilize the effective media machineries

UNOSOM HQ's responsibility to assess the target audience was never fulfilled.

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Relation Flexibility-Innovativeness- Adaptability

Pretesting the messages on "focus groups"

Developing metrics to measure the effects

Utilizing polls, follows blogs

Collecting data to have a deeper understanding

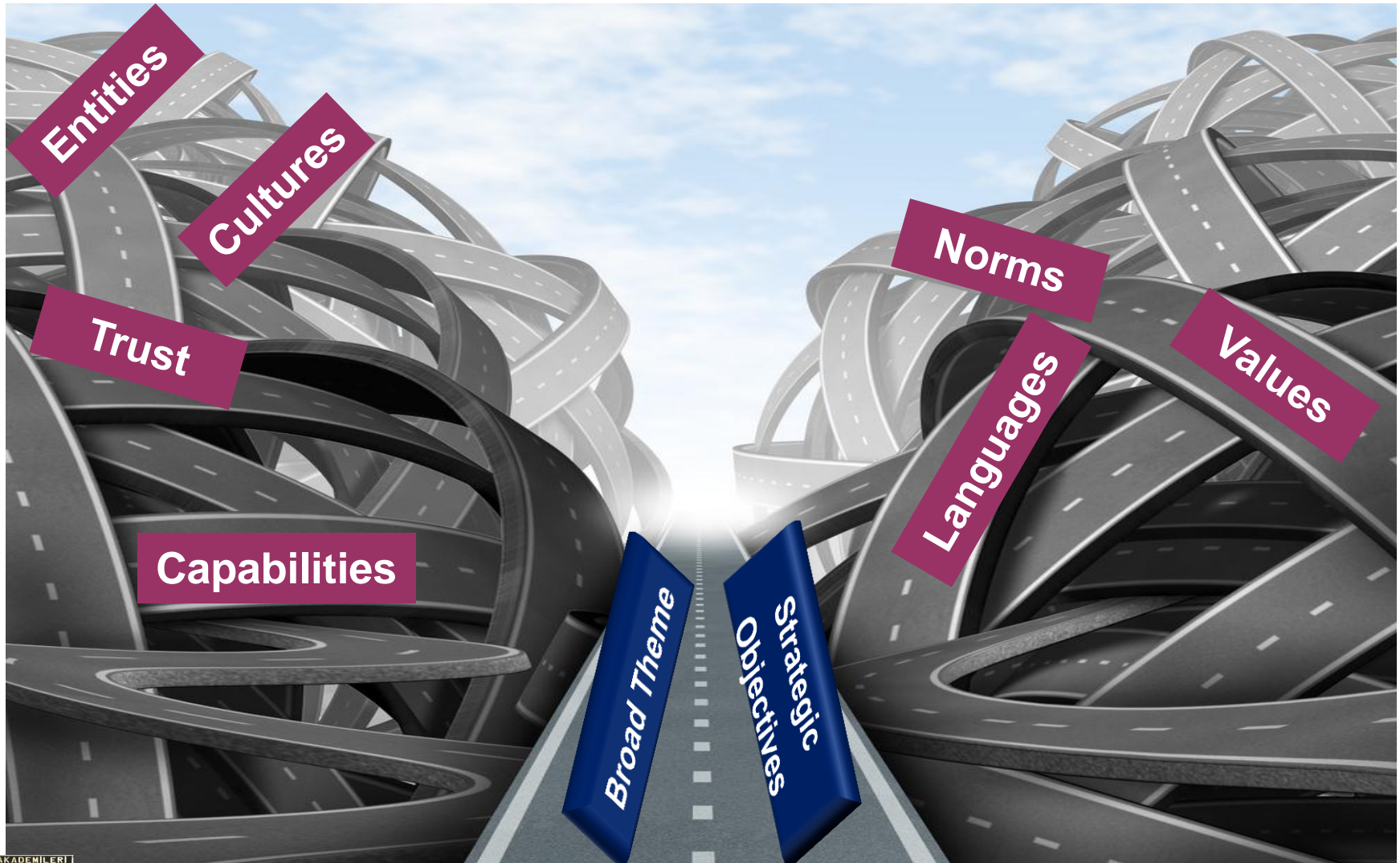Developing timely and culturally appropriate messages

Choosing alternatives formulated by the strategic communication efforts.

Improving new strategies according to the changes in the operation area

Becoming "suited for the challenge"

Effects of Strategic Communication on Uncertainty and Complexity

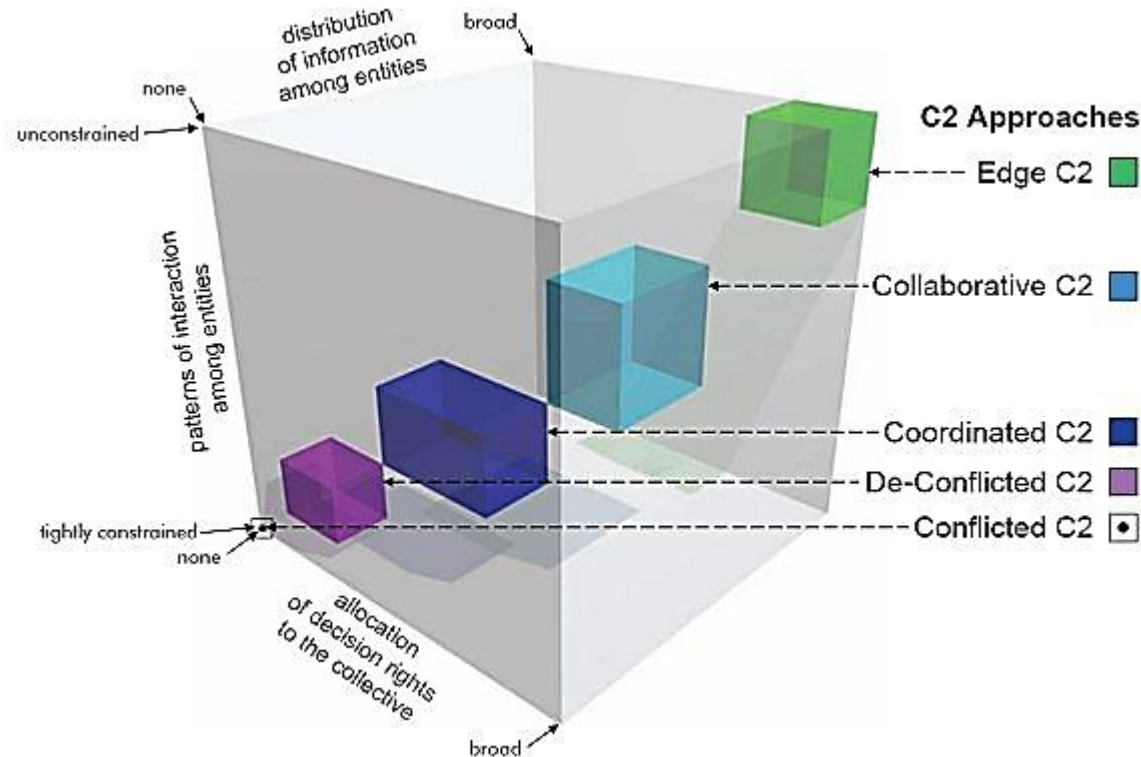# Effects of Strategic Communication on Uncertainty and Complexity

Instability

Opacity

Unfamiliarity

Unpredictability

Distortion

Identifying Characteristics

Social Network Analysis

Collecting Data

Feedback

Effects of Strategic Communication on C2 Maturity

**C2 Maturity** = **f** (C2 Approaches, Recognition of Situation, C2 Agility)

Effects of Strategic Communication on C2 Maturity (C2 Approaches)

	Distribution of Information	Allocation of Decision Rights	Patterns of Interaction
Strategic Communication	Use	Allow	Encourage

Effects of Strategic Communication on C2 Maturity (Recognition of Situation)

Dynamic

Complicated

Simple

Complex

Feedback
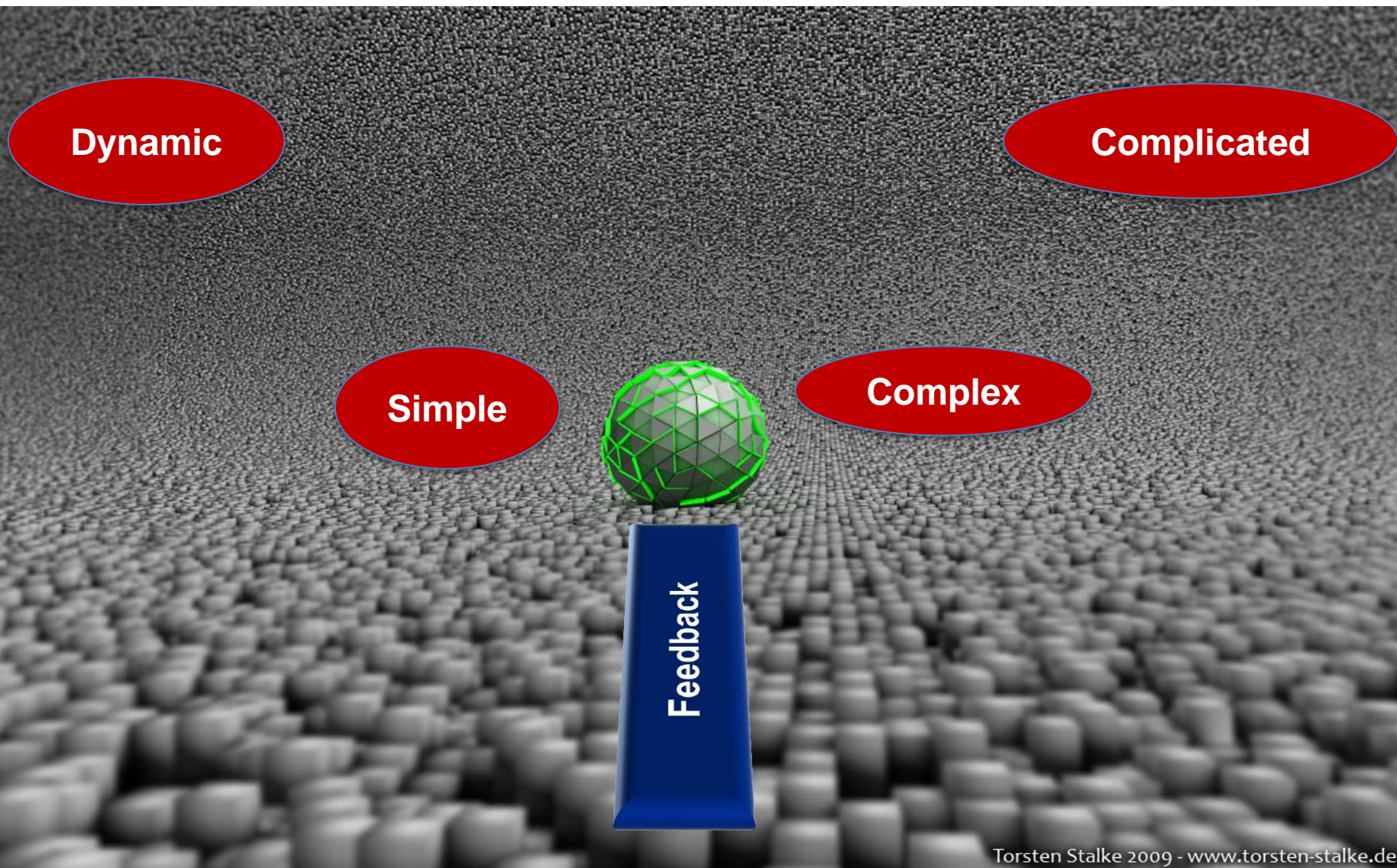
Torsten Stalke 2009 - www.torsten-stalke.de

Effects of Strategic Communication on C2 Maturity (C2 Agility)

Strategic Communication-C2 Agility Components Relations (Slayts:5-16)

Conclusion

The Strategic Communication principles affect all of these three elements of C2 Maturity. The effective implementations of them contribute to the entity's agility by strengthening its components. At the same time, these principles put lights on the complexities and uncertainties of the environment. In other words, the strategic communication helps planners and decision makers choose appropriate C2 Approach, move from one to another, and understand the conditions of the environment more accurately.

Conclusion
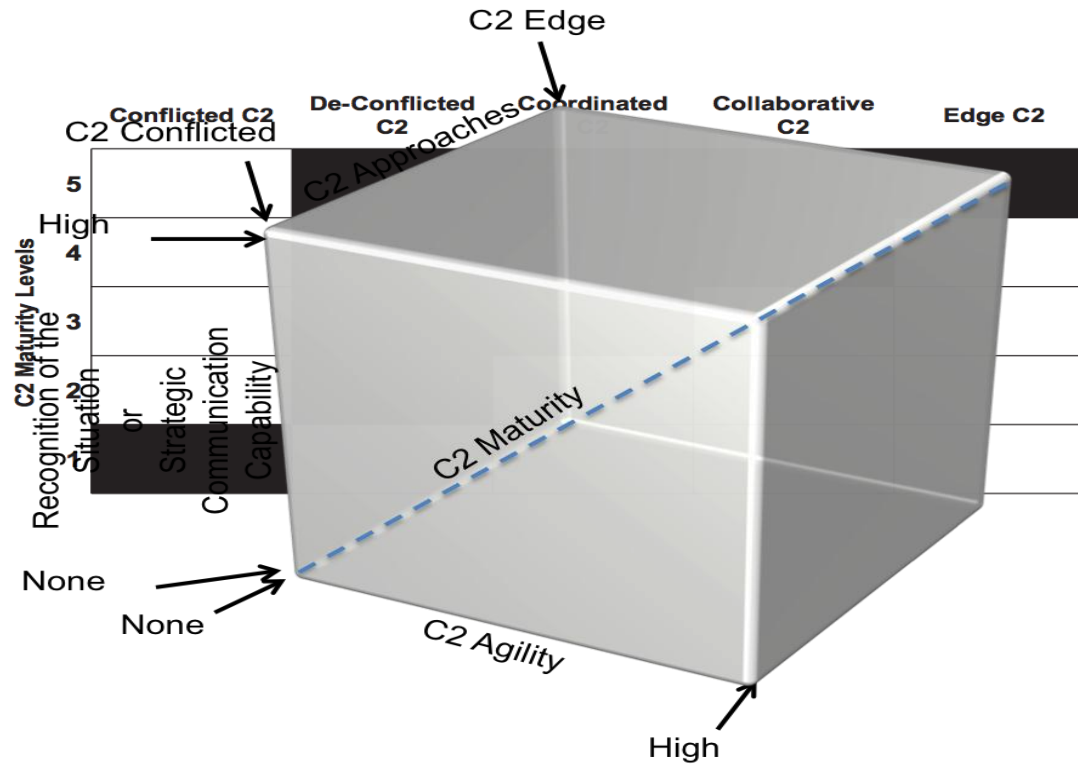
Thank you for your attention!

Any Question?